

## Employers Support Use of Comp Time

COMP TIME FROM PAGE 30

98), Biggert said she hopes this Congress will finally pass it. Unions have always opposed the bill, she noted, "though I don't see why. Hopefully collective bargaining will help" change their minds, she said.

Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., has introduced an identical version (S. 317) of the legislation, which is supported by the Bush administration. At press time, the text of the Biggert bill was not available online.

Co-sponsors of the House bill, including Rep. Deborah Pryce, R-Ohio; Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M.; and Rep. Jennifer Dunn, R-Wash., joined Biggert at a news conference March 6 to promote the benefits of the bill for working mothers.

Seventy percent of mothers with young children work outside the home, and the majority of hourly workers—those who would benefit most from the bill—are women, according to Dunn.

Jane Smith, CEO of Business and Professional Women/USA, also spoke, saying the women business owners in her organization supported the bill. Many of the group's 30,000 members were visiting their congressional representatives to drum up support for the bill.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) also supports the bill. In 2000, an SHRM survey found 41 percent of HR professionals polled supported amending the FLSA to allow comp time to increase flexibility for employees' personal leave needs.

"This legislation makes small changes to an outdated law, but the impact will be tremendous," said Susan R. Meisinger, SPHR, president and CEO of SHRM. "I believe passage of this bill will translate into more satisfied employees and more productive, successful organizations."

—Beth McConnell

## EEOC Urged to Overhaul Structure and Operations

**T**he report of an independent research organization makes wide-ranging recommendations regarding the structure, operations and human capital strategy of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the independent federal agency that enforces the nation's job discrimination laws.

The 38-year-old EEOC works to prevent and eliminate workplace discrimination and to investigate and adjudicate allegations of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability. The agency commissioned the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to help prepare its restructuring plan as required by the President's Management Agenda.

"EEOC's current structure, which was designed for 20th century programs and technology, does not permit it to meet all aspects of its current mission," said the NAPA report summary released Feb. 25.

Accordingly, the study's "most urgent recommendations" are those for a toll-free national call center that would allow individuals and employers to learn more about their rights and responsibilities, and a system that would allow persons electronically to file and track their discrimination complaints.

The report also calls for streamlining the agency's field structure and reducing the number of full-service locations. Today's technology, the report said, permits development of mobile units and a network of dispersed staff working from home offices.

To achieve a better balance between the agency's traditional enforcement activities and its more recent emphasis on prevention and mediation, the study also charged the EEOC with reorganizing its headquarters operation.

In addition to these major initiatives, NAPA makes a series of recommendations for upgrading the EEOC's human resources and technology support systems.

EEOC Chair Cari Dominguez "will appoint an internal task force shortly, which she will lead, to study the recommendations and determine which options should be adopted and when," David Grinberg, a spokesperson for EEOC, told HR News.

### 21st Century EEOC Envisioned

Many of NAPA's recommendations are geared toward moving the EEOC "away from a solely place-based focus of interacting with its customers," driven in part by real estate costs of over \$1 million a year for the agency's 51 field offices. The full report, which runs more than 200 pages, instead proposes a network of lead offices in areas with high workload levels, supported by possible satellite offices and a mobile unit.

Implementation should begin with pilots of this combination of services, NAPA said, so the EEOC can develop and test, among other things, customer service results, revised work processes and infrastructure support.

In addition to calling for secure technology tools to support teleworkers and possible circuit-riding staff, NAPA challenged the EEOC to develop a strategic plan that directly links human capital strategies to the organizational mission, goals and objectives. The breadth of its recommendations would require staff realignment supported by a new leadership structure and comprehensive workforce planning, NAPA said.

Emphasizing that the EEOC is not bound by the NAPA report, Grinberg said, "These are recommendations laying out multiple options for us to consider. It will be a five-year effort, not one year, or one month."

While the administration's timeframe for agency restructuring plans is five years, NAPA actually proposed a four-year timeline for EEOC restructuring.

"We will certainly keep our stakeholders informed about the recommendations under consideration," Grinberg said.

NAPA is an independent nonprofit organization chartered by Congress dedicated to improving the performance of governance systems.

—MARGARET M. CLARK, SPHR, J.D.

